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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (03/04): "JUDAIZING JERUSALEM IS
A SYSTEMATIC, ONGOING PROCESS"

Main Stories:

Al Quds leads with a report on Israeli plans to demolish 55 Palestinian apartments in Ras Khmays neighborhood in East Jerusalem. All papers front page the report. Israeli Jerusalem municipal authorities on March 3, ordered the residents to evacuate their homes within 72 hours. The papers quote Palestinian officials, including the advisor to the Palestinian Authority Premier Abdul Qader, stating that 50% of the apartments were recently readied for occupancy and the rest will be soon. Palestinian officials described the Israeli orders as another incident of ethnic cleansing against Palestinian Jerusalemites. Al Quds' front page reports that Palestinians in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Bustan, also facing demolition orders, "foiled a provocative tour," of the neighborhood by the Israeli Jerusalem Mayor on March 3.

In separate reporting, the three dailies front page Israeli plans to construct two tunnels in the Old City of Jerusalem to connect the Jewish Quarter to the Western Wall. The papers note that the construction is an Israeli attempt to boost control over the area surrounding the Al Aqsa mosque.

Al Ayyam and Al Hayat Al Jadida lead with an AFP report, on statements made by Secretary of State Clinton in Jerusalem following her meetings with Israeli leaders on March 3. Al Quds also runs front page coverage of the statements. All papers note with interest the Secretary's statements about the inevitability of the two-state solution and Washington's commitment to pursue active diplomacy in the region. The papers highlight Clinton's statements on America's "unrelenting commitment" to Israel's security and her call for a halt to rocket attacks from Gaza. The report also notes the disappointment of Arab Israeli Knesset member Ahmad Tibi over Clinton's support for any elected Israeli government. Finally, the report details the Secretary's March 4 meeting schedule with

Palestinian officials, concluding with comments by Palestinian Authority (PA) Presidential spokesman Abu Rudaynah stating that PA President Abbas will stress to Clinton that Israel must halt all settlement activities as required by the Road Map and Mitchell report, and that any Israeli government must commit to the two-state solution and previous agreements.

All front pages report on comments about travel plans to Syria made by two U.S. officials who are accompanying Secretary Clinton on her Middle East tour. The report quotes Clinton stating that the U.S. has many issues to discuss with Syria and therefore, she is sending two envoys to Damascus immediately after her visit to the region. Al Ayyam's front page highlights that Secretary Clinton outlined the details of U.S. assistance to the Palestinians, explaining that it will include \$300 million for emergency humanitarian assistance to Gazans and \$200 million in support to the Palestinian Authority (PA) budget and \$400 million in support to the PA Reform and Development Plan. In related news, Al Quds' front page reports that the Arab League announced on March 3 that Arab states will allocate \$500 million in additional support to the PA budget. The report further reveals that a statement is being prepared for the upcoming Arab summit, to demand international pressure on Israel to lift the "siege" on Gaza and abide by previous agreements.-----

BLOCK QUOTES:

1) Hani Habib comments in independent Al Ayyam on the Sharm El-Sheikh conference under the title, "A political conference! So what?"(03/04): "[Financial aid] figures overshadowed the political ideas presented at the conference: The French President called for an international peace conference in the Spring... whereas, the Italian President repeated his call for a "marshal plan" conference

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to rescue the Palestinian economy, and demanded... a [Palestinian] airport to serve Muslim and Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land... a canal between the Red Sea and the Dead sea... [it's curious] that the political dimension of the conference has been overshadowed,

, especially since the aid figures were known and announced before the Sharm El Sheikh conference."

2) Al Quds' editorial is titled, "Judaizing Jerusalem is a systematic, ongoing process" (03/04): "[continued settlement activities in Jerusalem] require a strong international, Arab and Palestinian response and effective pressure on Israel, because the timid... reactions have only encouraged Israel to continue its policies. It is time to [go]... beyond the former condemnations and statements that have proven to be a failure and incapable of stopping settlement encroachment on the Holy City."

WALLES